

"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away."

Henry David Thoreau



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Try explaining this one to mother.

Cover: Sergeant Swann, courtesy of Seabag Studios.

Opposite Page: Mike Arlen photographs military discipline.

GETTING OFF

We can hardly let a military issue go by without some sort of blast at our beloved military institutions themselves. Gay males love to dress up like, or be subjugated by, their worst enemies; therefore the popularity of police uniforms, Nazi uniforms and military regalia.

The old guard of the military doesn't like gays anymore than it likes civilian control, liberals, congressional investigations or peaceniks. It didn't used to like blacks or Asians but it can't openly get away with too much of that anymore. However, aided and abetted by the present administration, it wants no homosexuals and has cold-bloodedly persecuted and prosecuted men with unblemished records, even heroes, because someone heard a rumor that they might be that way.

THERE ARE NO GAYS AND THERE IS NO AIDS IN THE U.S. MILITARY.

U.S. Secretary of Bullshit

Now along comes AIDS and the Pentagon has jumped in with both feet. Everyone is to be tested for it. With an opportunity of this magnitude to lead the way for the rest of the country, the military has taken a stance that would have been admired by Attila the Hun.

There are things that the military does admire mightily, however: separation and duplication of its branches, the incredible pork-barreling and inefficiency of the military-industrial complex and the waste of billions of dollars, millions of man hours and thousands of otherwise excellent, talented and dedicated men who happen to prefer men.

The armed services lie about the numbers of gays on their rolls. The percentage is higher than for the civilian population. The incidence of AIDS has to be proportionately higher as well. But instead of leading the way for research, it prefers to stonewall it.

A friend of ours, a retired colonel, died recently of AIDS in a VA hospital. It took over three months to get him in. Their doctors told him he merely had a low-grade infection. Then, when he became too ill to stay home and was forced upon them, a needless biopsy collapsed a lung and hastened his death. It is time they learned what the characteristics of the disease are and how to treat them as well as civilian medical centers do.

And it is time to stop pumping all that money into obsolete bombers, MX systems and tanks that run out of gas before they can get to battle. Instead of worrying about "Star Wars," it is about time for them to bring their organizations into the twentieth century.

John H. Embry
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